



Nevada Achievement School District

Executive Director POSITION DESCRIPTION

THE CONTEXT

In the 2015 legislative session, spurred by years of Nevada's discouraging educational attainment statistics and a commitment to changing the odds, the State Legislature – working with Governor Sandoval and then State Superintendent Dale Erquiaga – took dramatic bipartisan action and passed [a sweeping package of 25 bills intended to radically improve educational outcomes](#) for all of its students. These ambitious policies represent an investment of nearly a billion dollars in new revenues for public education, intended to create an ecosystem of excellence across every tier of public instruction. At the heart of these measures is a belief shared by lawmakers and citizens that the state can, will, and must provide excellent schools and learning opportunities for all of its students.

Among the most notable reforms was the creation by the legislature of a new public entity – the [Achievement School District](#), or ASD – intended to identify the state's most chronically underperforming schools and strategically convert them to high-performing, vibrant community schools that live up to, and deliver, the promise of excellent public education.

Never has there been so much opportunity for systemic progress in Nevada, recognized both near and far; on September 28, 2015, the US Department of Education [announced that Nevada was one of just eight states to receive a multi-million dollar grant award from the Department's Charter Schools Program](#), which funds the creation and expansion of public charter schools across the nation, especially those that are creating pathways to college, credentials, and careers for low-income students and first-generation college-goers. Nevada's first year grant allotment is more than \$7.8 million with a potential allotment over three years of more than \$16 million.

At the same time, never has the need for this dramatic action been clearer; this year, more than 70 schools – with an enrollment of 57,000 students – have been listed on the Underperforming Schools List by the Department of Education. It is from this pool that a subset of schools will be initially considered by the ASD, and it is to this subset of schools that the ASD's Founding Executive Director will direct his/her energy and passion.

THE ORGANIZATION

The ASD is distinct in four important ways:

1. *The objective:* All children in Nevada have the right to an excellent public education. The Nevada ASD is focused on dramatically elevating the performance, student outcomes, and cultures of Nevada's persistently failing schools. It is the only school district in Nevada specifically dedicated to this cause.
2. *Portfolio approach:* The Nevada ASD will be a school district comprised of a portfolio of independent charter schools. The Nevada ASD will not directly operate any schools in its district; instead, its role is to ensure a successful management transition and to conduct ongoing oversight and performance management for the schools in the portfolio.
3. *Local Education Agency (LEA) status:* As their own LEAs, Nevada ASD charter schools will receive funding from the state like other LEAs, and they will have the same responsibilities as other school districts with regards to special education.
4. *Key partners:* The objectives and the work of the Nevada ASD will be shared by strategic, local, nonprofit partners, members of an evolving network of organizations who will assist in the recruitment and retention of high quality charter school operators.

In order to ensure the success of these bold initiatives, the increase in investment will be balanced with a focus on outcome-based accountability. Included in the legislation was a requirement for external third party evaluations of individual initiatives and also system-based reform should promises made result in promises not kept.

THE OPPORTUNITY

The ASD's founding Executive Director will have an extraordinary platform from which to lead this effort to transform schools – *and lives* – in Nevada. This critical work has the potential to positively affect thousands of students (together with their families and communities) who have been served by chronically underperforming schools for too long. This is a rare opportunity to serve in a leading role across the building, design, implementation, and delivery teams of a cutting-edge, entrepreneurial, social impact initiative working with and within diverse communities.

THE POSITION

Under the general direction of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, the Executive Director will be responsible for launching the work of the ASD and establishing the foundation for its long-term success. The Executive Director will build and supervise a small staff focused on developing and engaging with a broad range of internal and external stakeholders in the vision, strategy, and operations of the Achievement School District.

Specific Responsibilities of the Executive Director:

Launch the ASD:

- Lead the efforts of the ASD to recruit, retain, and support high-quality charter school organizations with a proven track record of shepherding underperforming schools from failure to excellence;
- Identify criteria for the selection of schools in Nevada to enter and/or exit the ASD;
- Establish and oversee an annual cycle of portfolio planning and analysis to determine progress, intervention, and monitoring of schools currently in the portfolio; and
- Develop and implement the policy and regulatory frameworks necessary to support the operations and success of the ASD.

Engage the community:

- Build and sustain a diverse statewide coalition of community support for the ASD including community leaders and parents, elected officials, business leaders, foundations; and
- Represent the Department publicly, including media and public appearances, participating in conferences, councils, associations, committees, and workgroups, testifying before the Nevada Legislature, and coordinating and participating in public information campaigns.

Establish the foundation for long-term sustainability and success:

- Create the conditions needed to attract the most promising school leaders, faculty, staff, and support organizations from across the state and nation;
- Identify and secure additional funding sources for the ASD;
- Participate in administrative hearings and rulemaking proceedings;
- Develop and present agency budgets and future legislative proposals; and
- Help define and achieve the vision, mission, goals, and objectives of the Department that are performance driven and results oriented.

REQUISITE QUALIFICATIONS

The Executive Director will possess the following **skills, experience, and attributes**:

- experience turning around low performing schools, or working within organizations that do so, particularly within high poverty, special education, and high ELL populations;
- deep knowledge and experience working with high-performing schools, including charter schools – particularly those that have a track record of success in large, urban districts;
- a track record of exceptional leadership skills including the ability to recruit, develop, and maintain a diverse team;
- exceptional verbal and written communications skills and a proven ability to build productive relationships with, and communicate complex messages to, a wide variety of stakeholders;
- strong analytical and critical thinking skills, particularly related to evaluating educational policy and complex data;
- the ability to coordinate, prioritize, and manage a variety of diverse and challenging tasks and systems while maintaining a high level of attention to detail;
- a Bachelor's degree in education, public administration, or a related field;
- authenticity, curiosity, and cultural competence;
- tenacity and enthusiasm to garner the support of the community;
- unwavering belief that all students can learn and achieve success in school.

The ***ideal candidate*** will also possess the following:

- the ability to speak Spanish fluently;
- a strong understanding of Nevada’s educational policy and landscape.

REPORTING RELATIONSHIPS

The Executive Director will report to the Superintendent of Public Instruction, and will build a small team of 3-4 direct reports.

POSITION LOCATION

Las Vegas, Nevada

COMPENSATION

The Executive Director will earn a competitive salary and benefits commensurate with experience.

START DATE

As soon as possible.

TO APPLY:

The executive search team at ***Bellwether Education Partners*** is leading the search. Inquiries and applications – comprising a resume and letter of interest – should be sent to:

Crystal Combs

Senior Consultant

Bellwether Education Partners

crystal.combs@bellwethereducation.org.

Bellwether Education Partners is a nonprofit dedicated to helping education organizations in the public, private, and nonprofit sectors become more effective in their work and achieve dramatic results, especially for high-need students. Our ***Talent Services*** practice identifies, places, and supports education leaders through comprehensive executive searches, customized search advisory services, and individual coaching. We also partner with clients to build talent-ready organizations where diverse teams can work, develop, and thrive.